

Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL)

Program Goal: Encourage adults over the age of 65 to stay active and reduce their chance of falling by improving strength, balance and fitness.

Program Format: SAIL is usually offered 2-3 times a week in a one hour class. Participants use weights for upper and lower body strengthening exercises. SAIL exercises can be done standing or sitting.

Program Development: Beginning in 2003 the Washington State Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funded a Senior Falls Prevention Study in Washington State. The Department of Health later sponsored senior focus groups which found the best way to engage seniors in an exercise program is to convey a message of “Staying Active and Independent”.



“This exercise program helped me reduce stress and increase physical movement.”

Researchers developed a two-day SAIL instructor training. They later adapted it into a 10 week online format. SAIL is a public-domain program with no site license fees and no yearly renewal fees for conducting SAIL classes. Instructors teach classes in many local communities and they can be low cost or free, depending on the community.

Program Results: A study found participants showed improved balance, mobility skills, leg strength, and a reduced fear of falling. An evaluation of the SAIL program found:

- 93% of respondents reported improved performance of daily activities*
- 92% reported improved strength, balance, fitness, or flexibility*
- 80% found the SAIL information guide education component helpful*
- The entire curriculum of activities in the SAIL Program can help improve strength and balance, if done regularly.*

Program Alignment: Results Washington Goal 4: Healthy & Safe Communities, Supported People, Quality of Life 3.2 to “Increase the percentage of long-term service and support clients served in home and community-based settings”. Healthcare Authority’s Common Measures: #59- Falls With Injury and #55- Potentially Avoidable Use of Emergency Department.

Find out more: sailfitness.org and livingwell.doh.wa.gov

Key Words: physical activity, balance program, muscle strength, group setting, health promotion, fall prevention